



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF HEALTH  
1102 SE Quince Street • PO Box 47990  
Olympia, Washington 98504-7990

## News Release

SBOH 03-01

**For immediate release:** January 7, 2003

**Contact:** Craig McLaughlin, State Board of Health, (360) 236-4106

### **State Board of Health to Discuss West Nile Virus, School Indoor Air Quality, and Public Health's Capacity to Meet New Standards**

*Wednesday, January 8, 9 a.m.–4:15 p.m., WestCoast Olympia Hotel, 2300 Evergreen Park Drive, Olympia*

When the Washington State Legislature convenes January 13, one of the challenges it must address is: How do we ensure that the public health system can respond to a growing number of challenges despite the current budget crisis? At its meeting January 8, the State Board of Health will discuss several topics that point to the need to protect and even strengthen the public health system.

“Over the years, the erosion of public health funding has been severe,” said Board Chair Linda Lake.

“Terrorism, anthrax, and the renewed possibility of smallpox have given the public a greater understanding of the important work public health does. Now we need to ensure we have the capacity to respond to emerging issues like West Nile virus, school health, and access to critical health services.”

The Board's afternoon agenda includes:

- A briefing on efforts to control the spread of West Nile virus.
- Committee recommendations about how the Board might respond to testimony from parents, students, and school employees that school buildings are making them sick.
- A discussion of recent work on the Public Health Improvement Plan, including an assessment of how close state and local government agencies are to meeting proposed standards and the level of funding that would be required to meet those standards.
- Development of a sense of the Board on likely legislative issues, including secure and stable funding for public health, and cuts in Medicaid benefits and Basic Health Plan enrollment.

Copies of the agenda and related materials are available by contacting the Board of Health at (360) 236-4110 or by visiting the Board's Web site at [www.doh.wa.gov/sboh/](http://www.doh.wa.gov/sboh/).

###

The State Board of Health serves the citizens of Washington by working to understand and prevent disease across the entire population. Established in 1889 by the State Constitution, the Board provides leadership by suggesting public health policies and actions, by regulating certain activities, and by providing a public forum. The governor appoints ten members who fill three-year terms. Visit the board's Web site at [www.doh.wa.gov/sboh](http://www.doh.wa.gov/sboh).